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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S BID IN THE WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION; U.S. ARMS PROCUREMENTS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major dailies focused their front-page news coverage May 12-14 on the crash of an air force F-5F fighter jet in Hsinchu County while carrying out a preliminary action for the 23rd Hankuang Exercise. The other focus is Premier Su Tseng-chang's resignation from his position.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, the pro-status quo "China Post" editorialized that it is a reality in world politics that Taiwan cannot become a full member of the World Health Organization, because the United States does not support Taiwan's bid, and China does not allow Taiwan to do so. The editorial added that the Taiwan government should call a halt to this stupid publicly financed campaign. Following the recent crash of an F-5F fighter jet in Hsinchu, another "China Post" editorial said that a major reason why Taiwan cannot decommission its aged F-5Fs is that the United States has refused to sell new-generation fighter jets, such as F-16C/Ds, to the island, because they are considered to be "offensive." End summary.

¶3. Taiwan's Bid in the World Health Organization

"We May Have to Pay for Folly"

The pro-status quo, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (05/14):

"... As a matter of fact, Washington had earlier stated that it does not support Taiwan's bid to become a full member of the World Health Organization, albeit it has supported participation as an observer in the last couple of years. The reason is simple: WHO membership is awarded only to United Nations member states. The republic of China on Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations in 1971, shortly before its concomitant ouster from the Geneva-based world body. Everybody knows it's not just unfair but wrong to keep Taiwan out of the World Health Organization. China doesn't want Taiwan to join, and practically the whole world has to go along with Beijing. That's world politics at its worst, but that's the way it is. Nobody can do anything to change that in any foreseeable future. There is no need whatsoever for trying to make the world or our own people any better aware of the international injustice Taiwan is suffering.

"Taiwan has been knocking at the door of the World Health Organization for ten years. That's an exercise in futility. But such exercises repeated constitute an act of folly. Private, non-profit organizations or wealthy public-minded individuals are encouraged to finance the lobbying. But the government should have called a halt to its public-financed campaign. Instead, it has continued to require taxpayers to pay for its stupidity."

¶4. U.S. Arms Procurements

"A Preventable Crash"

The pro-status quo, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (05/13):

"... An old air force F-5E jetfighter crashed into an army complex on Friday, killing two pilots aboard and as many Singaporean soldiers on the ground. Seven other military personnel from the Southeast Asian island state were injured, two of them critically, in the tragic accident that marred this year's ongoing Operation Han Kuang troop maneuver. None of the Singaporean troops were taking part in the exercise, however. They came to Taiwan under Operation Starlight, a program Taiwan undertakes to provide military personnel from Singapore with combat training they can't get in their own country.

"The aged two-seater warplane is the seventeenth of its kind to have gone down over the past 20 years. Worldwide, all F-5Fs have been decommissioned long ago, because they are no longer sufficiently airworthy, but Taiwan has had to keep them in operation because no new-generation fighter planes are available. The Air Force has tried in vain to buy F-16 C/Ds from the United States. Washington doesn't want to sell the planes, which are considered "offensive" fighters. President George W. Bush wants instead to sell defensive arms including submarines, anti-submarine helicopters and Patriot ground-to-air missiles. ..."

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